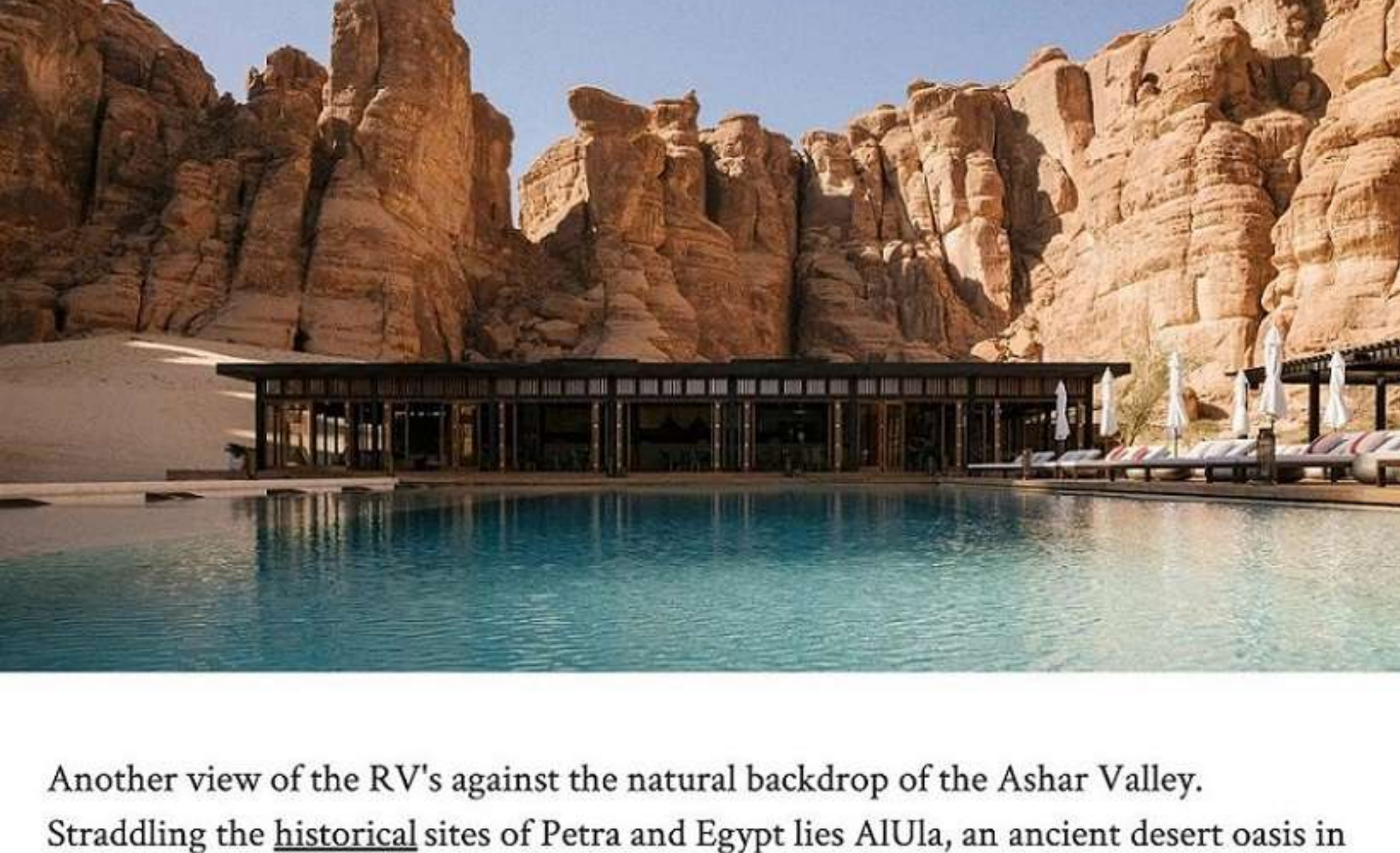


# This glamping site at AlUla in Saudi Arabia opens up a world of architectural wonders

This glamping experience in the Saudi Arabian desert is a gateway to a 200,000-year-old civilization.

By Fareeda Kanga

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Another view of the RV's against the natural backdrop of the Ashar Valley. Straddling the [historical](#) sites of Petra and Egypt lies AlUla, an ancient desert oasis in north-western Saudi Arabia.

*Also read: [AD's 23 places to travel in 2023](#)*

Amidst the sandstone canyons lies a truly unique glamping experience—twenty-two Retro Airstream trailers in an untouched desert oasis, providing the ultimate immersive experience for design enthusiast guests.



Inspired by the ancient Bedouins who travelled in this manner, these stylish caravans offer breath-taking views of the sandstone canyons and the diverse rock formations and gorges that make this destination a veritable outdoor museum. AlUla lies beneath one of the world's richest archaeological regions on earth—a site where the ancient Nabatean civilizations once thrived, and a stay in these caravans replicates the experience as best possible.

The Owners, Habitas, are legends in design and [hospitality](#) circles for straddling the worlds of shabby chic-meets-hippy, and have managed to cleverly combine all the mod-cons of suite life without compromising on a truly authentic experience.

The focus is on communal gathering spaces aimed at adventurous tourists who yearn to play and participate in activities rather than retreat in privacy.

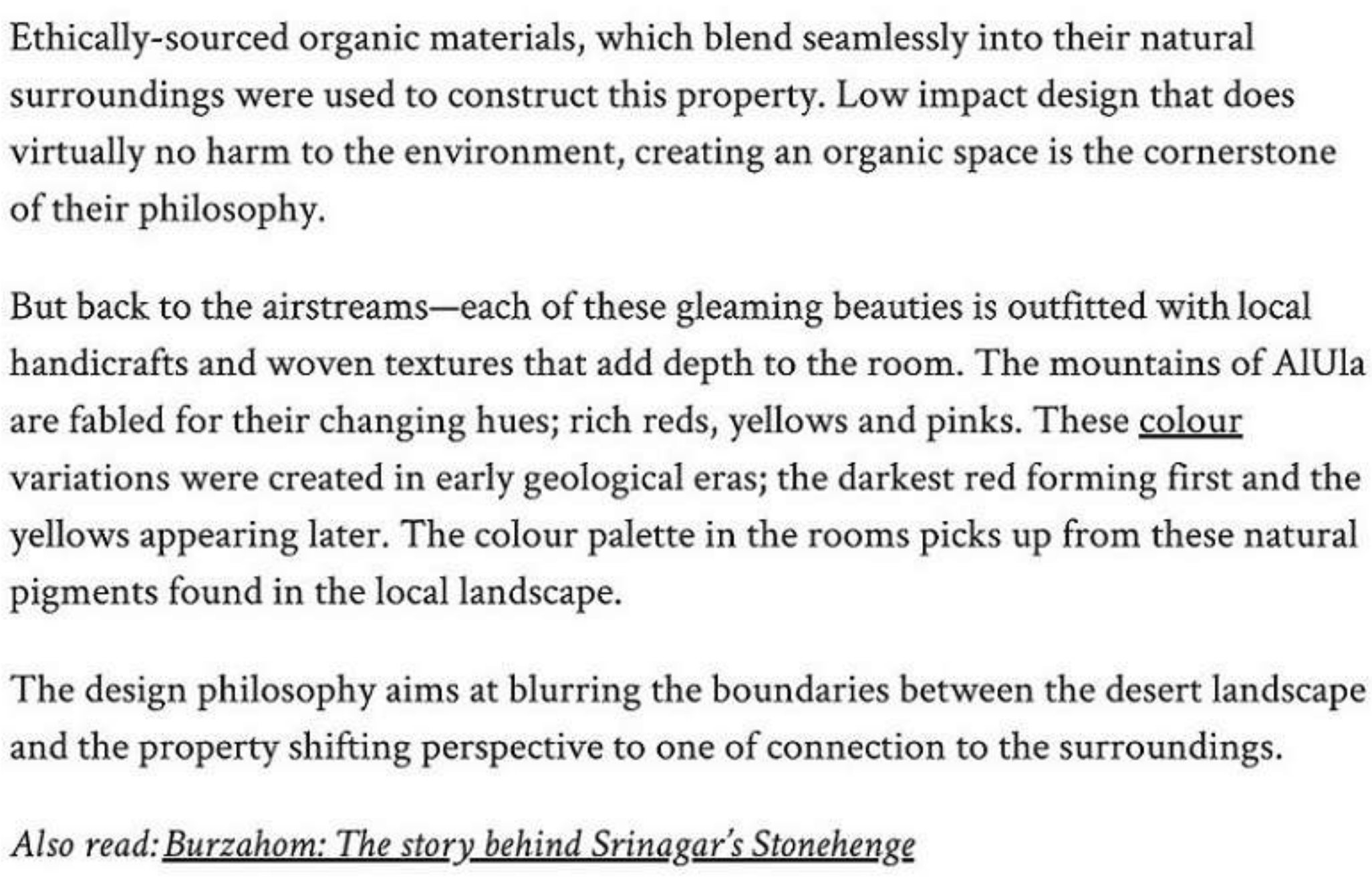


Ethically-sourced organic materials, which blend seamlessly into their natural surroundings were used to construct this property. Low impact design that does virtually no harm to the environment, creating an organic space is the cornerstone of their philosophy.

But back to the airstreams—each of these gleaming beauties is outfitted with local handicrafts and woven textures that add depth to the room. The mountains of AlUla are famed for their changing hues; rich reds, yellows and pinks. These [colour](#) variations were created in early geological eras; the darkest red forming first and the yellows appearing later. The colour palette in the rooms picks up from these natural pigments found in the local landscape.

The design philosophy aims at blurring the boundaries between the desert landscape and the property shifting perspective to one of connection to the surroundings.

*Also read: [Burzahom: The story behind Srinagar's Stonehenge](#)*



The 22 Airstreams come with two twin beds or a queen, shower and separate bathroom, dining area, and a few thoughtful amenities (A Louis L'Amour novel left at my bedside) besides the usual mod-cons such as air conditioning and wi-fi.

Guests are encouraged to mingle, and privacy is really not high on the agenda. And what better way than to have family-style communal [dining](#) in the desert?



Habitas amps up the meal experience with three funky food trucks serving everything—from pizza, ice cream, waffles, acai bowls and more. It's hard to make friends in this setting gazing at the archaeological wonders over a plate of beetroot hummus!

Other activities include night-time DJ sessions, and movie screenings projected onto the sandstone cliffs.



*View of the RV's against the natural backdrop of the Ashar Valley.*

Another exceptional design delight is the interactive art all around the property such as 'Falling Stones Garden' by Mohammed Ahmed Ibrahim, which is a natural reflection of the rockfall from the sandstone cliffs.

The supreme thrill of bouncing on the immersive [art](#) installations like Manal Al Dowayan's *Now You See Me, Now You Don't* (also known as *The Trampolines in the Desert*), to sweating it out on hidden hiking trails and exploring archaeological marvels (UNESCO World Heritage site Hegra, with 111 well-preserved tombs, is a 30-minute drive from the resort) make this destination one-of-a-kind.



*Atop a massive boulder sits a sculpture of the ultramarine 25th century female astronaut, Elyseria by Lita Albuquerque who created this fictional character.*

"Typical [luxury](#) hotels focus on impressiveness, we design more social architecture. We asked ourselves 'how can we make sure that people eat together and do yoga together, and what kind of communal meeting points can we create throughout the hotel?'" suggests CEO and Founder, Oliver Ripley.

*Also read: [10 boutique hotels around the world where celebrities vacation](#)*